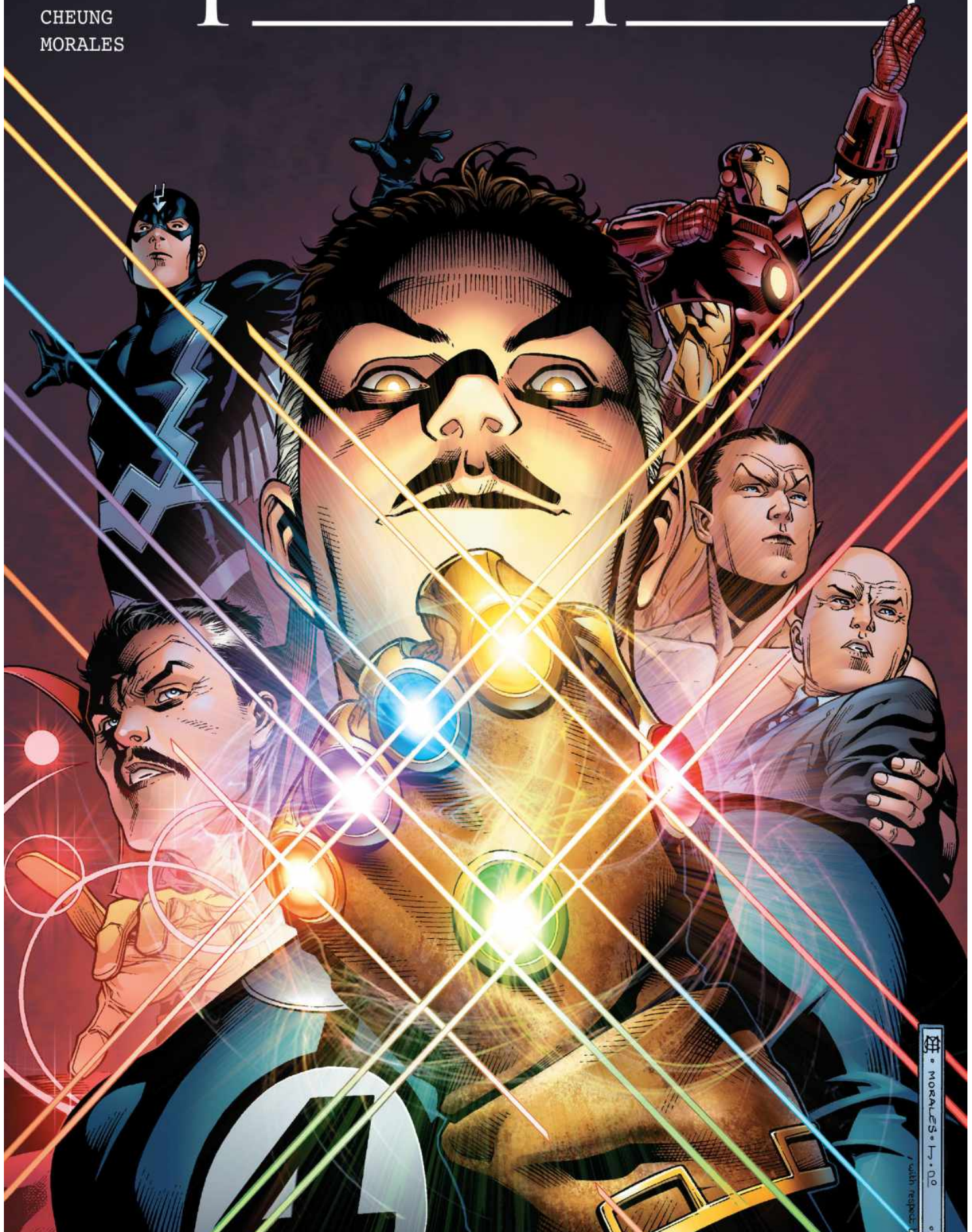


MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
2 of 5

BENDIS
REED
CHEUNG
MORALES

THE NEW AVENGERS®

ILLUMINATI™



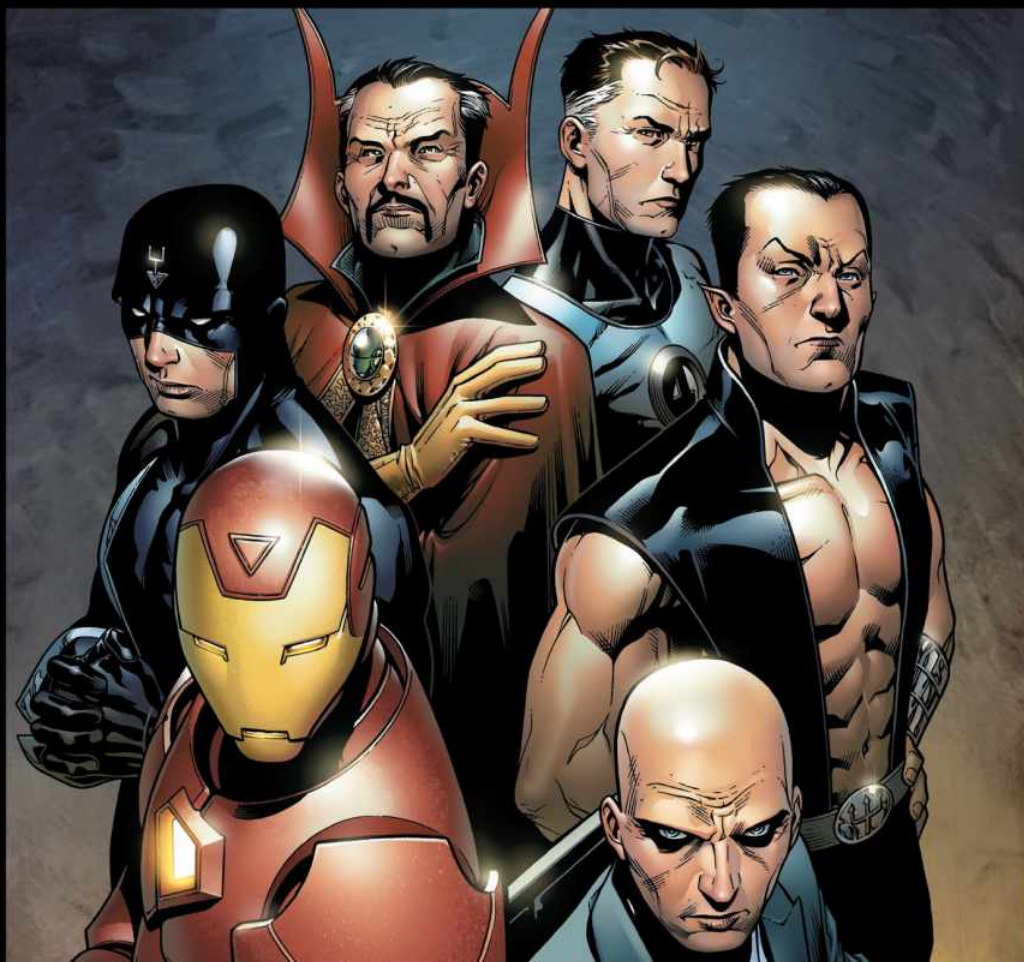
MORALES • 1 • 00
with respect

THE NEW AVENGERS ILLUMINATI

The Illuminati is a secret organization comprised of several of the world's most powerful heroes: Sorcerer Supreme Doctor Strange; Black Bolt, King of the Inhumans; Charles Xavier, founder of the X-Men and mutant rights activist; Reed Richards, founding member of the Fantastic Four; Namor, the Sub-Mariner, Ruler of Atlantis; and Iron Man, founding member of the Avengers.

These six men have worked together to shape the superhuman world. To keep the trust between the group members, the Illuminati's existence has been kept secret from everyone, including the members' teammates and families.

How and what they've done together has remained a mystery...until now...



Years ago, Thanos, the Mad Titan, gathered the Infinity Gems--stones that possessed unimaginable power--and attempted to use them to create an offering to his beloved Death by killing half the beings in the universe. After Thanos was defeated, powerful cosmic forces ruled that the Gems would no longer work in concert with each other, and they were scattered throughout the universe.

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SEVERAL MONTHS AGO...

THIS...IS AN INFINITY GEM.

THERE ARE SIX GEMS ALTOGETHER.

EACH WIELDS COSMIC-LEVEL POWER OF A SPECIFIC TYPE.

WHEN BROUGHT TOGETHER, THEY GIVE THE PERSON WIELDING THAT POWER INFINITE CONTROL OVER SPACE, TIME AND MATTER...

...OVER THE ENTIRE KNOWN UNIVERSE.

THIS IS THE POWER GEM.

MR. FANTASTIC
LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.

BLACK BOLT
KING OF THE INHUMANS.

NAMOR
RULER OF ATLANTIS.

AND HOW IS IT, DOCTOR RICHARDS, THAT YOU HAVE ONE?

AND WHY THE HELL DID YOU BRING IT HERE?

TONY STARK,
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN

DOCTOR
STRANGE

PROFESSOR
CHARLES XAVIER









HOLY--

WHERE HAVE WE GONE?

WE HAVEN'T GONE ANYWHERE.

I ASKED THE GEMS TO SHOW US WHERE THE OTHERS ARE.

I BELIEVE THAT IS THE MIND GEM.

THIS IS CONJECTURE, BUT IT LOOKS AS IF IT HAS SLIPPED FROM THE UNIVERSE AS WE PERCEIVE IT AND HAS LODGED ITSELF INTO WHAT WE COULD ONLY REFER TO AS THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS.

THERE! THAT MUST BE THE REALITY GEM.

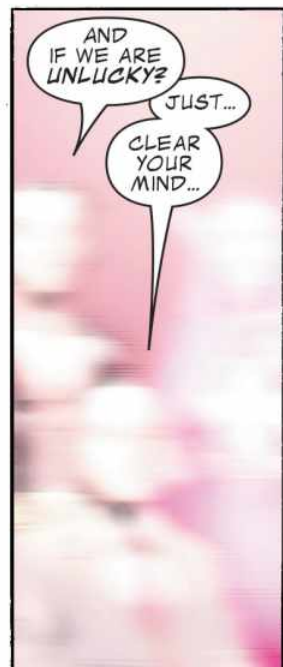
AND THE TIME GEM, WELL, THAT'S EVEN A BIT TRICKIER. HOW DO I SAY THIS IN LAYMAN'S TERMS...IT SEEMS TO BE ADRIFT IN TIME.

WE. HMM? YOU SAID "I" AND I THINK YOU MEANT "WE."

YES. OF COURSE.

BUT I THINK, ONCE I GET CONTROL OF THE OTHER INFINITY GEMS, I CAN USE THEM TO REACH

IT SEEMS TO SIT AT THE ACTUAL EDGE OF REALITY ITSELF.







THE BAXTER BUILDING, HOME AND HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR

WE'RE
ALMOST READY,
BLACK BOLT.

JUST A MOMENT
LONGER WHILE I
DOUBLE-CHECK ALL
THE EQUIPMENT.



AND YOU'RE SURE THIS
ISN'T GOING TO BRING THE
ENTIRE BUILDING DOWN?

PRETTY
SURE.

I'M HAVING TROUBLE
FIGURING THE CALCULATIONS
ALL THE WAY THROUGH.

WELL, I'VE
DONE MORE
INTERDIMENSIONAL
TRAVEL THAN
YOU.

WE SHOULD
HAVE DONE THIS
AS A GROUP.

FINDING
A GEM MAKES
FINDING THE NEXT ONE
CATEGORICALLY MORE
DIFFICULT.

FINDING TWO
AT THE SAME TIME,
ELIMINATES THAT
VARIABLE.



WHY AREN'T WE DOING THIS
SOMEPLACE SAFER--LIKE THE
MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN OR
THE NEGATIVE ZONE?

IF REALITY
FOLDS ON ITSELF,
IT WON'T MATTER
WHERE WE ARE.



NOT
"HA HA"
FUNNY.

LISTEN, REED,
WE DON'T HAVE
TO DO THIS--

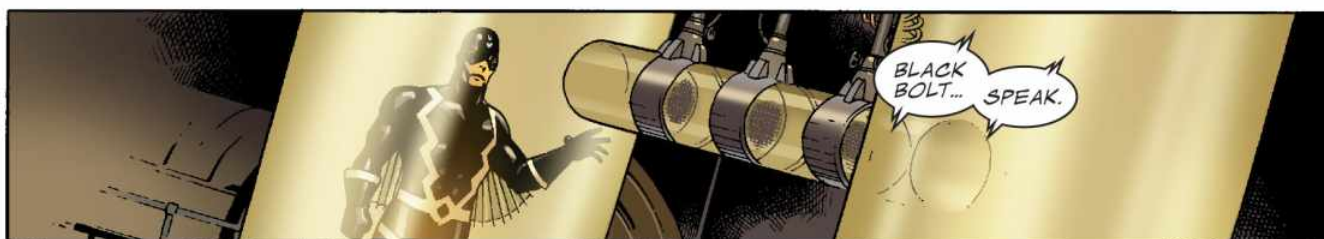
I
FEEL WE
DO.

I'M JUST
SAYING, IF
THIS IS JUST
BECAUSE--



I AM ABOUT
TO DO SOMETHING
HERE THAT I'VE ONLY
EVER DONE ON
PAPER.

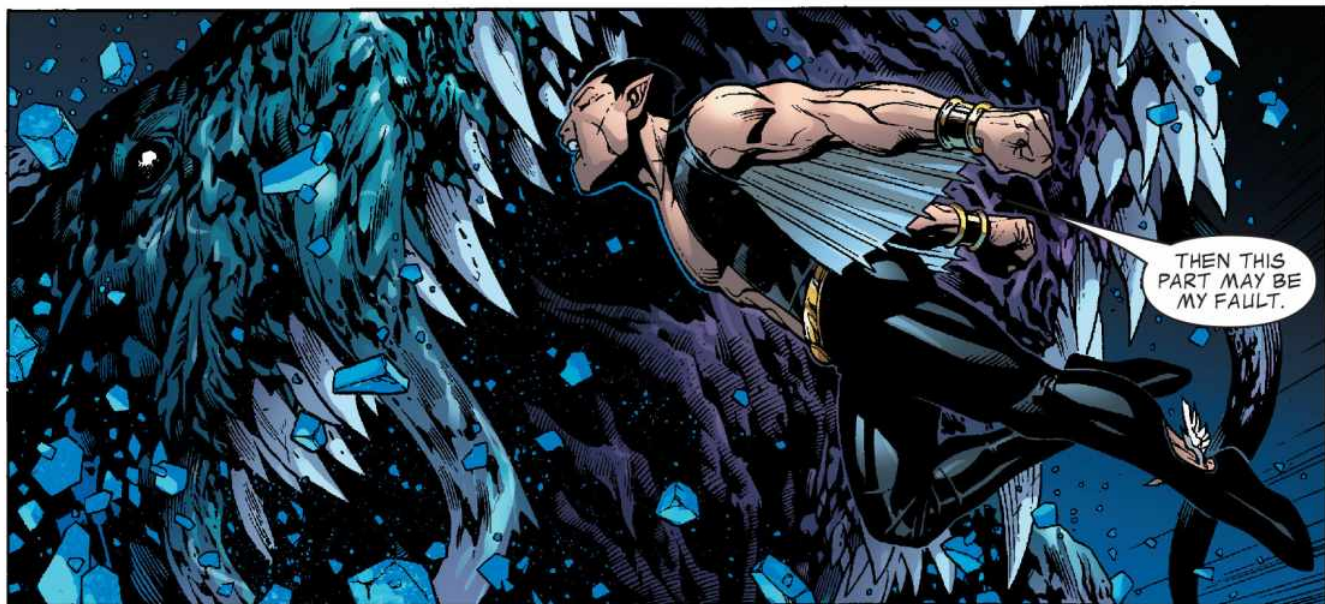
LET'S
FOCUS ON
THE TASK.

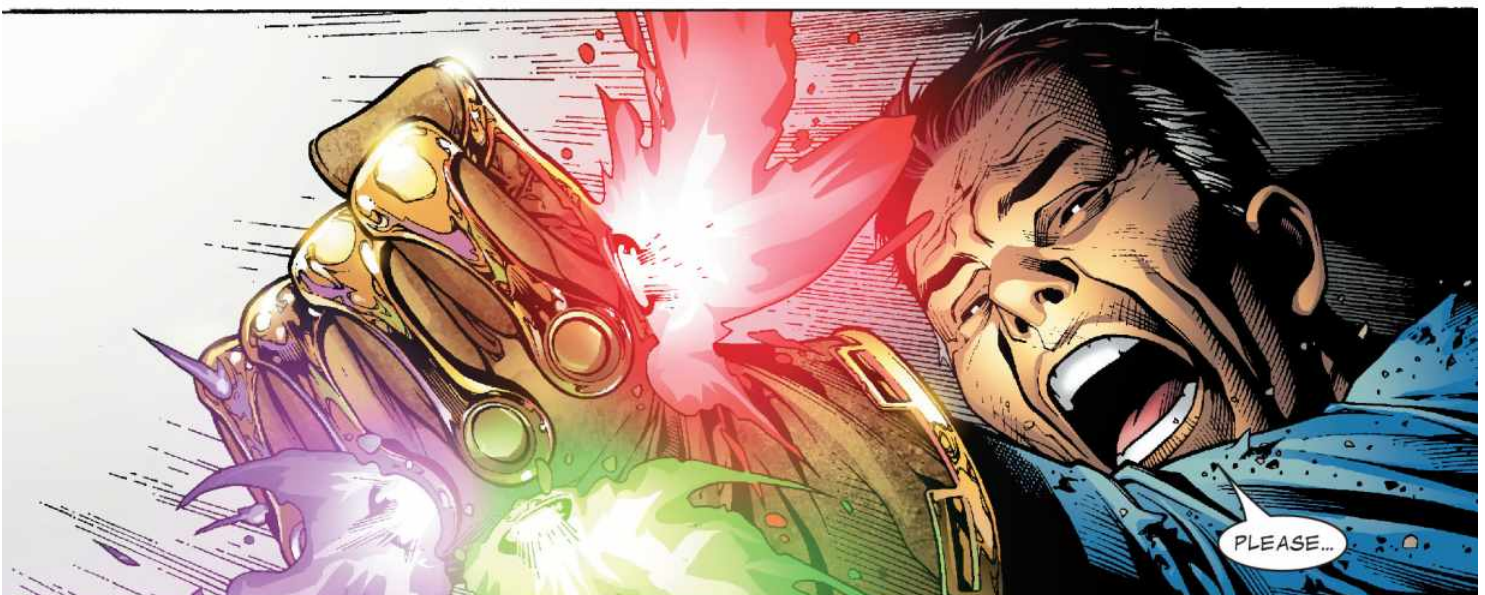
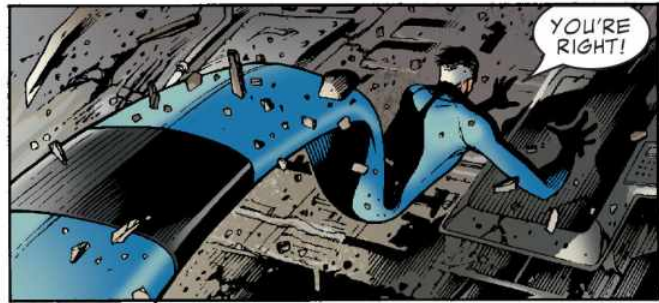


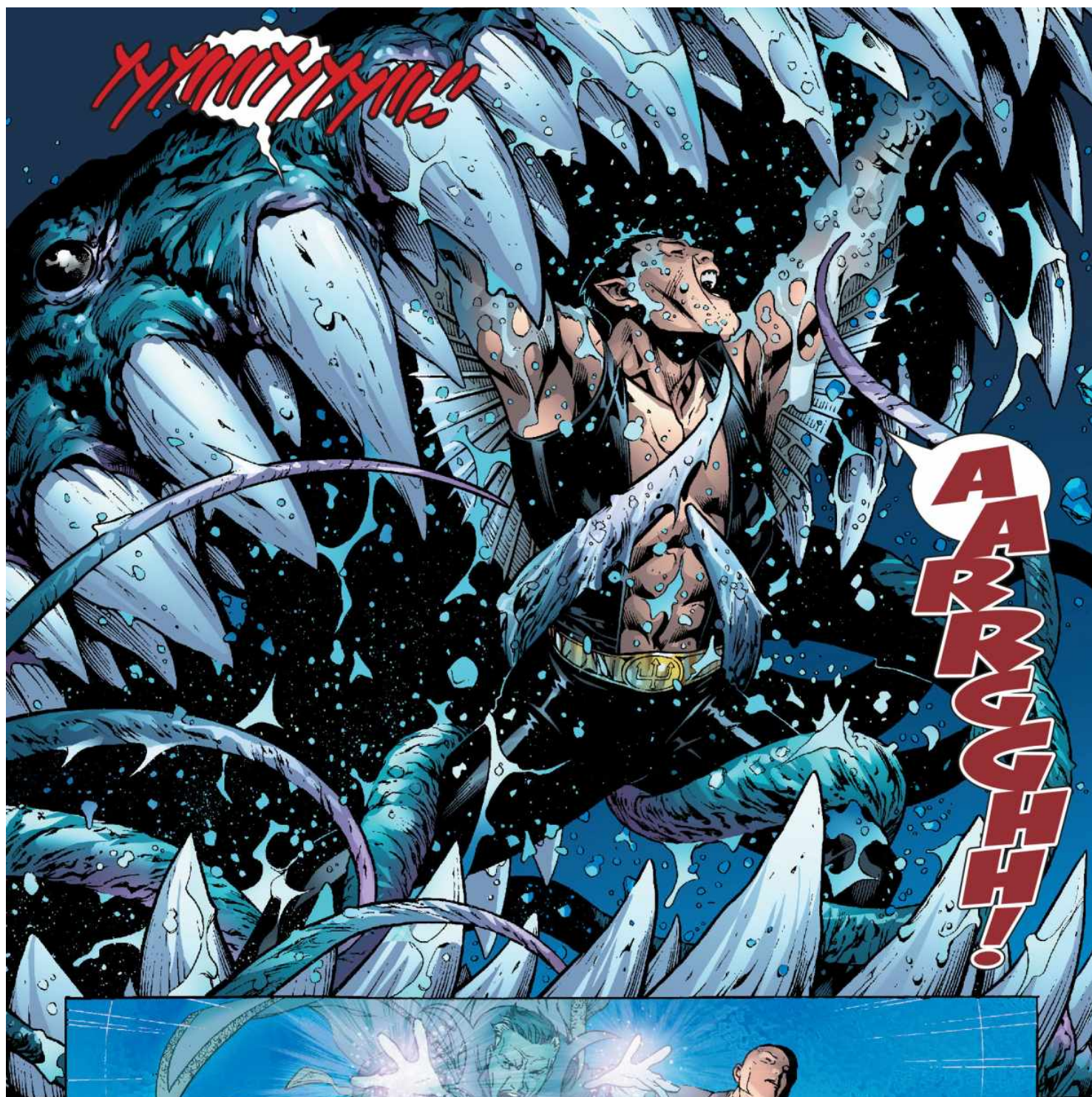


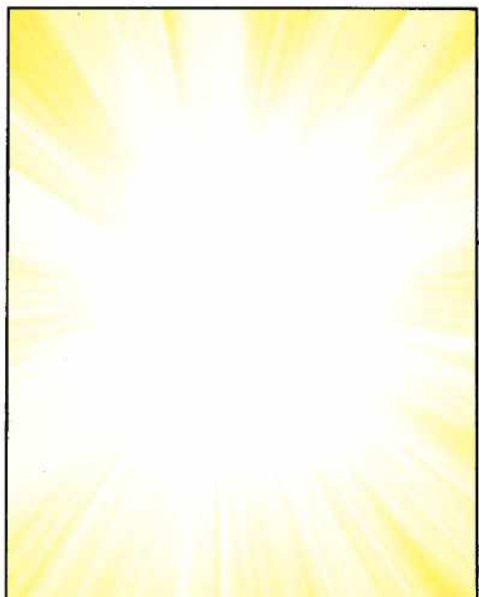


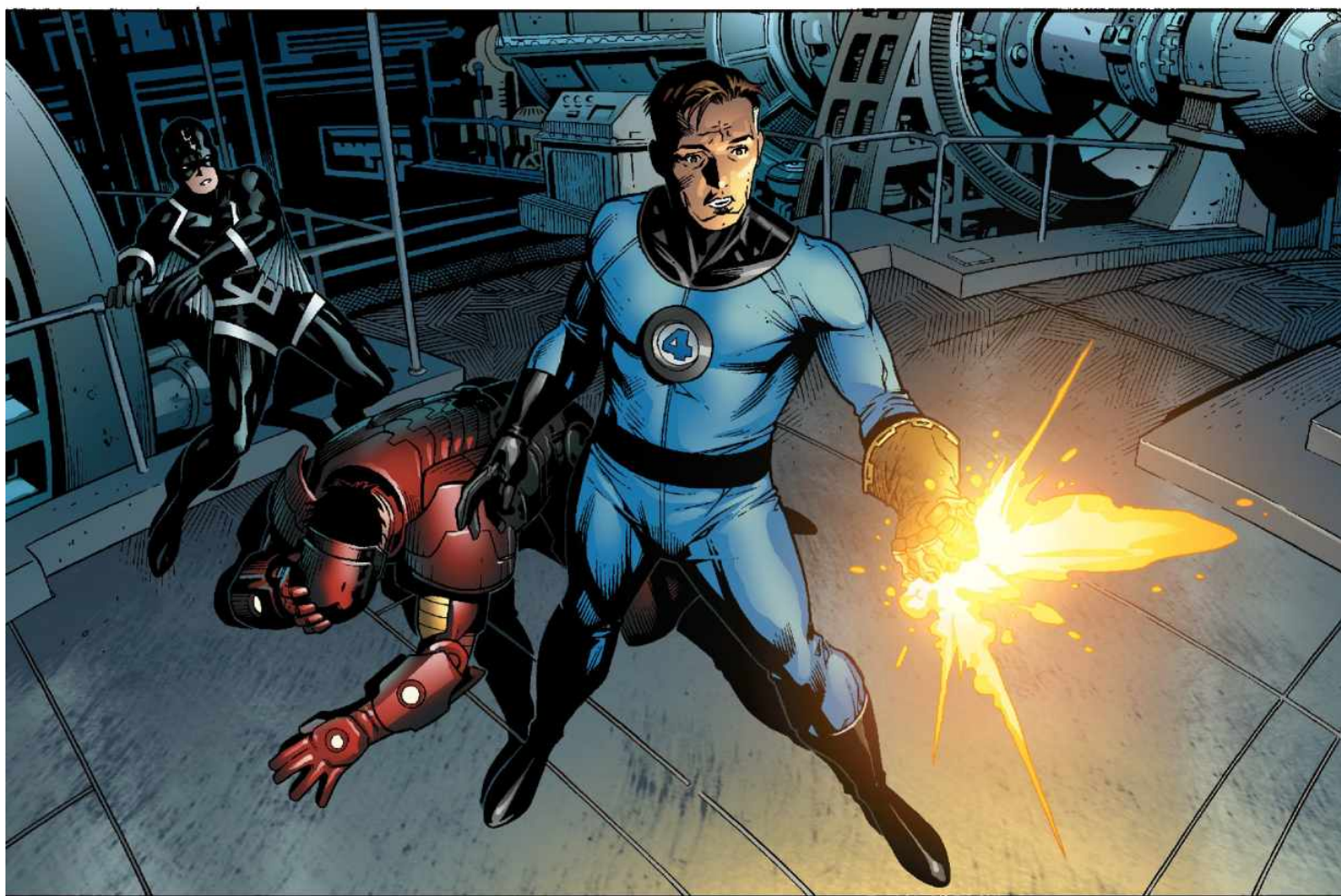


















REED RICHARDS...I EXPECTED MORE FROM YOU.

THE WATCHER!

MY JOB IS TO WATCH AND RECORD THE UNIVERSE'S DEFINING EVENTS. AND NOW I FIND MYSELF HERE, WATCHING THIS.

WATU...

I HAVE BROKEN THE CODE OF MY EXISTENCE COUNTLESS TIMES FOR YOU. BECAUSE I BELIEVED IN YOU.

I BELIEVED, GIVEN A CHANCE, THAT YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE CAN ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING. AND THIS IS WHAT YOU DO?

MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO WIELD THIS KIND OF POWER. IT'S BEYOND YOUR UNDERSTANDING.

REED, TAKE IT OFF.





BECAUSE
I ALSO
BELIEVE...



...THAT
GIVEN A
CHANCE...



...THAT
WE...



...CAN
ACCOMPLISH
ANYTHING.



GIVEN THE
CHANCE.



EACH ONE
OF US WILL HAVE
A GEM. AND NEVER
EVER SHALL WE
USE THEM.

YOU WILL
HIDE THEM FROM
EVERYTHING AND
EVERYONE.

WE
WILL BE THEIR
PROTECTORS.

NONE OF
US WILL KNOW
WHERE THE OTHERS
HAVE HIDDEN
THEM.

IT IS THE
ONLY WAY TO
KEEP THEM
SAFE.



THIS WAS NOT
YOUR DECISION
TO MAKE,
RICHARDS.

I FEAR WHAT
WILL HAPPEN TO YOU
ONCE YOU'VE BEEN
DISCOVERED.

BUT I AM
PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL
YOU WERE **STRONG** ENOUGH
OF MIND TO NOT GIVE IN TO THE
GAUNTLET'S TEMPTATIONS.





Shadowcat

